

Older Driver Working Group
Proposed Strategy for Presentation to the NC ECHS
October 24, 2006

**Strategy – Increase Public Awareness of Issues Affecting Older Drivers and
Access to Resources for Maintaining Safe Mobility**

General Description

There is a need for greater public awareness and understanding of issues affecting older drivers and ways older adults can be helped to prolong their safe driving years. The public also needs reliable information on access to alternative means of transportation when driving is no longer an option.

Several states have addressed these needs through broad-based programs incorporating public information and education (PI&E) along with concrete efforts to expand available resources at the state and local levels. Oregon, for example, initiated *Shifting Gears in Later Years*, a statewide plan for increasing awareness about the state's comprehensive policy for licensing mature drivers. As part of the plan, a web site was developed that offers information to older adults about staying safe behind the wheel, assessing their driving skills, retiring from driving, referring an unsafe driver to the DMV, and accessing alternative transportation and resources.

In 2003 the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, or AAMVA, partnered with NHTSA, the Administration on Aging, AARP, AAA, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, and others to develop GrandDriver, a comprehensive social marketing campaign designed to educate the public, especially older drivers and their adult children, about the effects of aging on driving ability and the importance of families discussing driving. Following successful pilot testing in Washington, D.C., the GrandDriver program has been packaged for national distribution with AAMVA support.

Two states that have implemented especially comprehensive GrandDriver programs are Virginia and Florida. Both programs involve successful partnerships that are able to reach out to a broad constituency of older adults and their families. In Virginia, the program is led by the Virginia Department for the Aging with support from the DMV, AARP, AAA, and local medical facilities. In Florida, GrandDriver is hosted by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles in partnership with NHTSA, AARP, AAA, Florida TRIAD, the Florida DOT, the Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists, and Communities for a Lifetime. Through its website, the program makes information available about the effects of aging on driving ability, resources for evaluating one's driving fitness, driver refresher courses, and alternative transportation. Visitors to the web site can enter a county and city and immediately access available transportation in their area. They can also download information and brochures that address a wide variety of problems and issues confronting older drivers.

This strategy would involve creating and marketing a web site for making important safety information and resources available to North Carolina's growing population of older drivers. The strategy would draw upon the expertise of partners of the State's Senior Driver Safety Coalition,

including AARP, DHHS Division on Aging and Adult Services, DMV, AAA, NC Medical Society, and others. At a minimum, we envision the web site incorporating information on:

- How aging can affect functional abilities important for safe driving;
- The effects of medical conditions and medications on driving performance;
- Resources and tips to keep driving safer longer, including information on available driver safety courses, self-assessment tools, booklets for downloading and printing, etc.
- Resources for family members or friends concerned about the safety of an older driver;
- Resources for driving assessments by a qualified occupational therapist or other driving rehabilitation specialist;
- **NC driver licensing requirements and rules of the road**
- **How to report an unsafe driver to the DMV (information for physicians and for the general public);**
- NCDOT's efforts to improve roadways for older drivers, and how to report a potentially unsafe roadway location;
- **Alternatives to driving, with links to available resources in each county/city.**

We recommend that the web site be hosted by the DHHS Division on Aging and Adult Services or other “senior friendly” agency, but that it be linked to the web site of each partnering agency/organization. The web site is envisioned as a first step in establishing a broader “GrandDriver” type program here in North Carolina.

<i>Technical Attributes</i>	
Target Audience	The primary target audiences for this strategy are older adults and their family members.
Expected Effectiveness	Although the original GrandDriver program piloted in Washington, D.C. was evaluated by NHTSA and proven to be effective in increasing public awareness of issues affecting older drivers, to our knowledge no formal evaluation has been conducted of just the web site portion of the program. Available statistics from the Oregon DMV suggest that, to be effective, ongoing effort must be devoted to marketing the program and keeping the information posted current (per communication with William Merrill, ODOT, 9-18-06). The Florida Granddriver website has received over 91,000 hits and has recently expanded its marketing efforts (per communication with Selma Sauls, Florida DHSMV, 9-26-06).
Keys to Success	Keys to the successful implementation of this strategy include commitment by a lead agency or organization to host the web site and strong participation and support from other key agencies and organizations (stakeholders). The web site must be appealing to its target population of older adults. It must also be broadly promoted, e.g., through announcements in AAA and AARP newsletters, media releases, postings at senior centers, etc.
Potential Difficulties	Sufficient funding to support development and maintenance of a quality web site.
Appropriate Measures and Data	Depending upon available resources for developing and maintaining the web site, data can be gathered on number of “hits” or visits to the site, number of documents downloaded, number of links followed, etc. At this point, no formal evaluation of the web site’s impact is anticipated.
Associated Needs	None identified.
Organizational, Institutional, and Policy	As noted above, successful implementation of this strategy requires a high level of cooperation among partnering agencies and organizations.

Issues	
Issues Affecting Implementation Time	Although work could begin right away on the development of the web site, there may be some delays in obtaining required agency approvals to participate in or link to the web site.
Costs	Depending on arrangements with the host agency, costs for this strategy are those associated with the initial design and layout of the website, the required computer programming to create the site, and any ongoing requirements for maintaining the site and keeping the information provided current.
Training and Other Personnel Needs	None required.
Legislative Needs	None identified.

Resources / Model Older Driver Web Sites:

Oregon Shifting Gears in Later Years: <http://www.oregonsafemobility.org/>

Virginia Granddriver Program: <http://www.granddriver.net/>

Florida Transportation Lifetime Choices: <http://www.hsmv.state.fl.us/ddl/tips.html>

Florida Granddriver Program: <http://www.floridagranddriver.com/>

Michigan ACTS Older Driver Tool Kit: <http://townsafety.com/ACTSweb/ODT/overview.htm>

AAMVA GrandDriver Program <http://www.granddriver.info/>

California ElderSafety web site: <http://www.eldersafety.org/>